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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, regarding the bombing on 17 December 1998 by the forces of aggression of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of a warehouse containing stored rice in the city of Tikrit.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

On 17 December 1998 at 1.05 a.m. the forces of aggression of the United States of America and the United Kingdom fired a Tomahawk missile at a warehouse containing 2,600 tons of rice imported with the profits from sales of Iraqi oil, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding. The warehouse, which was located in Tikrit, and its contents were completely destroyed. At midday the competent Iraqi authorities brought members of the press and news agencies present in Iraq to visit the site.

We wish to inform you that we have requested the Coordinator of the United Nations Humanitarian Programme in Baghdad to inspect the site to determine how much of the imported rice was destroyed with a view to replacing it.

We also wish to denounce again the attack by the United States of America and the United Kingdom against Iraq. In the eyes of international law this attack is a crime against humanity for which the United States of America and the United Kingdom bear full responsibility. The destruction of the aforementioned warehouse is in itself an attack on the civil and humanitarian rights of the Iraqi people and proof of the untruthful nature of the claims made in American and British circles that those countries are seeking to safeguard the rights set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq